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**REMARKS  
BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA  
ENDING PREVENTABLE CHILD DEATH BY 2035  
A CALL FOR ACTION  
RUPOSHI BANGLA HOTEL, DHAKA  
JULY 21, 2013**

The Honorable Minister of Health and Family Welfare Professor AFM Ruhul Haque, MP

The Honorable Advisor to the Prime Minister for Health and Family Planning and Social Welfare Professor Syed Modasser Ali

The Honorable State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Captain (retired) Dr. Mujibur Rahman Fakir, MP

Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare MM Neazuddin

The Country Representative, UNICEF, Pascal Villeneuve

Asalaam m'laikum and good evening

Children ... no matter where you go in the world ... people love children ... after all, those miniature hands and feet and shiny smiles are in fact the future, our future.

Yes ... we all love children ...

Sadly, this year over 7 million children around the world – many of them right here in South Asia – will die before they celebrate their 5th birthday. Compounding this tragedy is the fact that most of these deaths are preventable.

Imagine the parents who have lost a child ... their grief is fathomless; their hearts will never heal ... picture those bright, smiling young faces snuffed out for good ... children who will never go to school; children who will never grow up and have careers and start families of their own; children whose unique contributions the world will never know.

So sad ... so unnecessary ...

“Enough!” Bangladesh had declared to the world, “Enough with preventable death of our children ... we want our children to live, to thrive, to build Sonar Bangla.”

In Washington last June at the Child Survival: Call to action Summit, which the US, UNICEF and others sponsored, the Health Minister signed a pledge to end preventable child deaths by slashing child under-five mortality to 20 or fewer per thousand live births by 2035. Since then 172 countries have signed the same pledge.

I am not surprised that Bangladesh, once again, is showing the way on health. Bangladesh is one of the few countries anywhere in the world that is on track to achieve Millennium Development goals relating to child mortality and maternal mortality. Bangladesh has already reduced child under five mortality by 60% ... wow ... be impressed. Such progress in child survival is a good measure of how well the country is meeting the needs of its people. Bangladesh should be proud of this continuing progress. According to the Economist, “The most dramatic period of improvement in human health in history is often taken to be that of late-19th-century Japan, during the remarkable modernization of the Meiji transition.

Bangladesh’s record on child and maternal mortality has been comparable in scale.”

Of course, there is always more to do. Although neonatal mortality has declined somewhat thanks to increased presence of skilled attendants at delivery and to improved child and newborn care practices, neonatal mortality, as we have heard, still represents 60% of remaining child under-five deaths. Bangladesh has made clear that these deaths are unacceptable.

Today, Bangladesh is committing itself to scale up a package of 11 interventions and six support programs that are proven effective in addressing the remaining causes of child under five mortality in Bangladesh. These endeavors focus heavily on ensuring the survival of newborns, the last and most important frontier in the battle to end preventable child deaths. As we saw in Dr. Musa’s presentation, for each key intervention, Bangladesh is setting clear, measurable, and time-bound coverage targets that will allow progress to be tracked over time. I applaud this approach, which is results-based and accountable.

We must not forget that ending preventable child deaths in Bangladesh will also require major investments and commitments in educating girls, empowering women, achieving broad-based economic growth, and ensuring food security. Child survival is recognized globally as one of the best measures of equitable social and economic progress.

Through this re-commitment today to end preventable child death by 2035, Bangladesh yet again demonstrates that it is a global leader and model among emerging countries for how effective

government leadership and vibrant civil society can join efforts to ensure ever improved health of the nation's people.

I am proud that America is Bangladesh's stalwart partner in improving the health of the nation's people, most especially the children. Last year America provided more than \$32 million to support Bangladesh's efforts to improve child and maternal health and nutrition. As the head of USAID Rajiv Shah declared in a statement honoring today's conference, America "looks forward to our continued collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and the citizens it serves. Together, America and Bangladesh strive for a future where every parent has the opportunity to see his child celebrate his or her 5th birthday."

Indeed, that is the goal we all share ... where every father, every mother sees their children celebrate their 5th birthday ... this is grand goal ... and I have every expectation that Bangladesh, with the support and help of its many friends around the world, including America, will fully succeed in achieving this goal. I believe Bangladesh will yet again triumph in improving the health and well-being of its people, especially the children. Bangladesh, be proud of your continuing progress in protecting your children, your future.

Thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*